

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VE

SUBJECT: BILATERAL TALKS OF THE SECRETARY WITH

FOREIGN MINISTER OF VENEZUELA

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR HELD PRODUCTIVE, 65 MINUTE BREAKFAST MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY ON MAY 10 IN WHICH A NUMBER OF REGIONAL BILATERAL TOPICS WERE RAISED. THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS WERE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO THE US MIGUEL ANGEL BURELLI RIVAS, VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN SIMON ALBERTO CONSALVI, ARA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS, ARA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS, INTERPRETER ANTHONY HERVAS, AND DESK OFFICER SONANDRES.

2. THE SECRETARY BEGAN BY EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR GOV ASSISTANCE IN THE PREPARATIONS FOR HIS TRIP, FOR THE UNDERSTANDING WHICH THE GOV SHOWED, AND FOR THE CALM GOV PUBLIC RESPONSE. ESCOVAR RESPONDED THAT THE GOV LOOKED FORWARD TO A FUTURE VISIT WHICH CAN ACCOMPLISH MUCH.

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3. THE FORMIN EXPRESSED LATIN AMERICAN CONCERN (INQUIETUD)

THAT THE US POWER IN THE POST-VIETNAM ERA WOULD BE CONCENTRATED IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE IN AN INFLEXIBLE MANNER. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE. THE USG NOW BELIEVED IT CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT TO BUILD A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM. HE ADDED THAT PROGRESS IS NOT PRODUCED BY CONFRONTATIONS, A CONCEPT WITH WHICH ESCOVAR

CONCURRED.

4. THE FORMIN RAISED THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE, SUGGESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO RESOLVE THE TREATY ISSUE IN TIME FOR THE 1976 SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESS OF PANAMA. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO CONCLUDE A TREATY AND THAT WE HAVE THE FRAMEWORK IN WHICH IT COULD BE MUTUALLY ACCEPTED, BUT THAT WE HAVE TO AVOID DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CONGRESS. THE WORST WHICH CAN HAPPEN, HE STATED, IS FOR LATIN AMERICA TO BRING PRESSURE AGAINST US NOW.

5. RESPONDING TO ESCOVAR'S CONCERN OVER THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION, THE SECRETARY SAID THAT WE DO NOT OBJECT. WE SEE INTEGRATION PRINCIPALLY AS A LATIN AMERICAN PROBLEM, BUT ONE, HE ADDED LATER, WHICH SHOULD LEAD TO SOME FORM OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND LATIN AMERICA.

6. ESCOVAR EMPHASIZED ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE, POINTING OUT THAT IN LATIN AMERICA MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS AND DEMOCRACIES AS WELL CONCUR, TO A GREAT EXTENT, THAT THIS IS WHAT REALLY PROVIDES COMMON LATIN AMERICAN IDENTITY. THE FORMIN TOLD THE SECRETARY QUOTE I THINK IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BE AWARE OF OUR GOAL OF SEEKING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE UNQUOTE. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE GOV OFFICIAL THEN CITED VENEZUELAN IRON ORE AND PETROLEUM NATIONALIZATIONS WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS MODELS OF DEMOCRATIC NATIONALISM, WITHOUT QUOTE CHOPPING HEADS UNQUOTE BUT WITHIN JURIDICAL NORMS. THE SECRETARY STATED THAT WE HAVE RECOGNIZED THIS (I.E., VENEZUELAN ANALYSIS), THAT HE SUBSTANTIALLY AGREED WITH THE GOV POSITION, AND THAT WE

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HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH THEM ON THAT SCORE.

7. ESCOVAR CONTINUED ON THEME, SAYING THAT WE HAVE TO SEEK NEW FORMS OF COOPERATION. HE SAID THAT USG ASSISTANCE TO LATIN AMERICA IN FERTILIZER, FOOD, AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WOULD BE USEFUL, SUGGESTING THAT WE RE-EVALUATE CERTAIN PRINCIPLES ON WHICH OUR RELATIONSHIP IS FOUNDED. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SUGGESTED A RE-EVALUATION OF THE ETHICS

OF THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE US BICENTENNIAL OFFERED A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER LATIN AMERICAN-US COOPERATION. HE ADDED THAT VENEZUELA IS A MATURE (SERIO) COUNTRY, BEYOND THE MILK-FED STAGE, AND ONE WHICH CAN ACT AS BRIDGE TO THIRD WORLD. THE SECRETARY CONCURRED. HE SUGGESTED CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND MORE BILATERAL CONTACTS AS IS THE CASE BETWEEN THE US AND IRAN. THE SECRETARY PROPOSED

THAT THE USG AND GOV DISCUSS SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND OCCASIONALLY POLITICAL THEMES THROUGH SOME MECHANISM PROVIDING FOR MORE CONTACT. THE SECRETARY NOTED THE USG CANNOT HAVE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WITH EVERY COUNTRY, BUT THAT VENEZUELA WAS IN A CRUCIAL POSITION FOR US. ESCOVAR AGREED. HE REFERRED TO A GROUP WITHIN FOREIGN MINISTRY ALREADY WORKING ON INCREASED USG-GOV COOPERATION.

8. REGARDING PARIS PREPCON, SECRETARY SAID THAT PRELIMINARY TALKS WITH VENEZUELA COULD HAVE RESULTED IN EACH COUNTRY TAKING SEVERAL IDEAS OF THE OTHER SERIOUSLY. HE STATED THAT USG PREPARED TO DISCUSS COMMODITIES AS WELL AS PETROLEUM BUT NOT ALL AT ONCE. WE ARE INTERESTED, HE SAID, IN ANOTHER EFFORT AT A PRODUCER-CONSUMER CONFERENCE.

9. ESCOVAR RAISED CUBAN ISSUE, URGING OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION, PARTICULARLY TO GIVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO THE PRESTIGE OF THAT ORGANIZATION AND TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA. THE SECRETARY PROPOSED THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT BE MADE FOR A CONFERENCE TO BE HELD, IN JUNE IF DESIRED, AT WHICH CUBA AS WELL AS REFORMS TO RIO TREATY AND OAS CHARTER COULD BE DISCUSSED. FOREIGN MINISTER FOUND PROPOSAL CONSTRUCTIVE AND SAID HE WOULD CONSULT WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ.

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10. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS PRODUCTIVE. ESCOVAR IMPRESSIVELY COVERED THE LARGE NUMBER OF ITEMS IN HIS PREPARED AGENDA. AS A CONSEQUENCE, MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION WAS DEVOTED TO A DEFINITION OF THE USG POSITION ON ISSUES WHICH HE RAISED. KISSINGER

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